DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 377 CE 077 096

TITLE	Listen & Learn II.
INSTITUTION	Community Building Resources, Spruce Grove (Alberta).
PUB DATE	1998-09-00
NOTE	63p.; For a report of phase I, see ED 414 503.
AVAILABLE FROM	Community Building Resources, 10, 51330 Range Road 271, Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada T7Y 1H1 ($10 Canadian dollars plus shipping).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Community Cooperation; Community Coordination; *Community Development; *Community Organizations; *Community Resources; Foreign Countries; Models
IDENTIFIERS	*Alberta

ABSTRACT

Six community builders in Edmonton, Alberta, planned, developed, and implemented Listen and Learn II, a reflective research project in asset-based community building, over a 6-month period in 1998. They met regularly over 2 months to plan the research and design a method that was open to participation at any stage, encouraged exchange of information among communities, and fostered continued growth through reflection. Nine key questions guided questionnaire development: what was being done, how and where the initiative started, how community assets were found and mobilized, challenges of community building, what determined sustainability, whether there was a role for a community builder, whether there was funding, how it evolved, and how success was defined. Interview data from eight groups were interpreted in three phases. Four main conclusions were drawn: (1) three key underpinnings for asset-based community building emerged: engaging others, relationship building, and action; (2) interviews and interpretations clearly indicated that the optimal group structure in community building was one that fostered an environment where the underpinnings could happen; (3) results of Listen and Learn II affirmed the elements of RAFF (Relationships, Action, Food, and Fun) that emerged from the first phase of the project; and (4) the Listen and Learn II method nurtured community building. (Appendixes include a description of development of Listen and Learn I, a model for community building; the model; summary; questionnaire and correspondence; and data analysis plan.) (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 423 377

Listen & Learn II

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
S Roberts
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

September, 1998

Researchers:

Neil Moore
Angie Dedrick
Miriam Grosh
Susan Roberts
Mary Gallivan
Graham Mitchell
Cheryl Willier
Mitch Miyagawa

Copies available through:
Community Development/Community Building Resources
c/o Jasper Place High School
#681 8950 - 163 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5R 2P2
Phone: (403) 484-9045 Fax: (403) 484-9099
e-mail: cdoffice@cha.ab.ca

CE017096

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Listen and Learn II is reflective research in asset-based community building that is a follow-up to "From model to reality - Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping©, Listen and learn... the answers are with communities." Breaking out of the traditional research mold, Listen and Learn II has been planned, developed, and implemented by six industrious community builders - the 'Do-ers' over a period of six months in 1998.

Listen and Learn II has been an incredible learning experience for everyone involved. The results highlight the key elements essential to asset-based community building. Talking and reflecting together has helped to distill and illuminate the elements that make community building initiatives successful.

The 'do-er' group met regularly over a period of two months to plan the research, and they designed a unique method that was **open to participation at any stage**, **encouraged the exchange and flow of information and learning between communities**, and **fostered continued growth through reflection**.

Nine Key Questions emerged and were used to guide the development of the questionnaire, including:

1. What are you doing?
2. How and where did the initiative start?
3. How did you find the community assets and mobilize them? Be specific.
4. What were the challenges of Community Building?
5. What determined sustainability?
6. Was there a role for a Community Builder?
7. Was there funding?
8. How has it evolved?
9. How did you define success?

Eight groups were interviewed, including Beverly Towne, Celebrate Parkallen, Grandin Community Group, Jasper Place Gateway Foundation, Mapping Inglewood Assets, Norwood Community Action Project, Queen Alexandra Community Knowledge and Skill Sharing, and Swan Hills Rolling Thunder.

The data was interpreted in three phases. The first interpretation took place on May 1 and 2, 1998, in Swan Hills, Alberta, during Community Building Gathering II. A second interpretation was undertaken by the 'do-er' group following the Swan Hills gathering. The 'do-ers' used the whole data set to answer five of the nine Key Questions, including questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 9.

As a third stage of interpretation, the results of each 'do-er's' interpretation were shared and discussed with the 'do-er' group as a whole, and the 'do-er' interpretations were

compared to the Swan Hills interpretations. Also, a brief retrospective interpretation was completed to augment Key Question 4.

Four main conclusions can be drawn from this reflection:

1. **Three key underpinnings for asset-based community building** emerged in this reflection and affirm the findings of Listen and Learn I. They include **engaging others**, **relationship building**, and **action**. Engaging others and relationship building both arose as essential elements for discovering and mobilizing community gifts, and were also seen as important determinants for the sustainability and success of the community building initiative. These two underpinnings also assisted the groups in moving to action, the third key underpinning. All of the groups who participated in this reflection planned and accomplished community actions or events. These actions were seen as important determinants of sustainability and success.

2. The interviews and the interpretations clearly indicate that the **optimal group structure** in community building is one which fosters an environment where the three key underpinnings, engaging others, relationship building, and action, can happen. This structure provides social opportunities for the development of friendships, and ensures that the group has action and accomplishments.

3. The results of **Listen and Learn II clearly affirm** the elements of **R.A.F.F.** (**R**elationships, **A**ction, **F**ood and **F**un) that emerged from Listen and Learn I and the Community Building Gathering in November 1997.

4. The **LLII method nurtured Community Building**. The interviews helped the community groups see their accomplishments, feel good about what they had done, and for some groups, renewed their energy. Those who interviewed another group were able to glean information for their own group through the exchange of ideas.

REPORT:

Listen and Learn II

Table of Contents

		Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		i
TABLE OF CONTENTS		iii
APPENDICES		iv
I.	BACKGROUND	1
II.	INTRODUCTION	2
III.	METHODS	3
IV.	RESULTS	7
V.	FEEDBACK ON THE METHOD	20
VI.	DISCUSSION	21
VII.	LIMITATIONS	25
VIII.	CONCLUSIONS	26
IX.	FURTHER RESEARCH	28
X.	REFERENCES	29

IX. APPENDICES

A: Who are We?

B: Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© Philosophy

C: Listen and Learn I Summary

D: "Community Building Resources"

E: Questionnaire

F: Invitation

G: Thank You Letter

H: Transcript Thank You

I: Data Analysis Plan

I. BACKGROUND

Listen and Learn II is reflective research in asset-based community building that is a follow-up to "From model to reality - Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping©, Listen and learn... the answers are with communities!", also known as Listen and Learn I. In this research, asset-based community building (ABCB) and asset-based community development (ABCD) mean the same thing.

Listen and Learn I was designed to reflect upon a model for Community Building that was developed by the Community Development Office, Capital Health Authority (CDO) (See Appendix A: Who are we?). This model is called Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping©, and more specifically the Steps to Capacity Success© (Appendix B: Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© Philosophy). Seven community groups who had engaged in the Steps to Capacity Success© as a way to build their community were interviewed using a questionnaire that was developed to address five key questions. These questions were:

1. How and where did the initiative start in the community?
2. What were the common elements used to find the assets and mobilize them?
3. What determined the sustainability of the community building over time (1-3 years)?
4. Was there a role for a service provider and what was the role? Was there a role for a community builder and what was the role?
5. Did any elements of the Community Building require funding, and if so when was it received and who was the funder?

The results of Listen and Learn I (Appendix C: Listen and Learn I Summary) were shared at the 1997 Community Development Society Conference. These results were also affirmed by discussions at a Community Building Gathering in November 1997, which included community builders from throughout Edmonton, Alberta, and the United States who came together to share their experiences in asset-based community building.

The combined experiences of over forty community builders from throughout Alberta, Canada, and the United States who participated in Listen and Learn I and the Community Building Gathering (November 1997) led to the clarification of the most important components of community building - **Relationships, Action, Food and Fun. R.A.F.F.** has been shared with community groups throughout Alberta, and was introduced to an international audience at the 30th Annual Community Development Society Conference, July 1998 in Kansas City, Missouri.

II. INTRODUCTION

Listen and Learn II is an attempt to build on the rich learnings accumulated during Listen and Learn I, the Community Building Gathering I, and the 'Chat and Chews'. The approach taken for Listen and Learn II was quite different than that of Listen and Learn I. Listen and Learn I was undertaken as a way to reflect on the work in which the CDO and its associated business Community Building Resources (CBR) (see Appendix D: "Community Building Resources") had been involved. Although it resulted in valuable information that has been shared broadly, it was initiated, designed, and conducted solely by the CDO. The theory base and practice base for Listen and Learn II has been built on the sources used in Listen and Learn I, enhanced by a new research design.

Breaking out of the traditional research mold, Listen and Learn II was planned, developed, and implemented by six industrious community builders - the 'Do-ers'. This group designed the reflection to be open and inclusive during all stages of the research, and hoped that community members' participation in the reflection would promote or enhance their community building efforts through learning from others.

III. METHODS

1. Initiation - the "kick start"

On January 29, 1998, thirteen community builders were invited to meet to discuss the possibility of working together to conduct a second reflection in community building in follow-up to Listen and Learn I. Six people volunteered to be directly involved in planning, developing, and conducting the research. They included: Mary Gallivan, Neil Moore, Miriam Grosh, Angie Dedrick, Cheryl Willier, and Mitch Miyagawa. Susan Roberts and Graham Mitchell volunteered to be a 'sounding board.' Mitch subsequently moved away, and Graham Mitchell became part of the 'do-er' group.

The 'do-er' group met regularly over a period of two months to plan the research and design a unique method that was to be community building in itself. This was guided by the following principles:

1. Open to participation at any stage.
2. Encourages the exchange and flow of information and learning between communities.
3. Fosters continued growth through reflection.

Choices made to support the above principles include interviewing groups rather than individuals, and inviting individuals from the interviewed community groups to be the interviewer for another community group. It was hoped that this approach would allow the groups to reflect upon their community building initiative, learn from other groups, and perhaps spark new ideas, provide motivation to continue, or assist the group to grow.

2. Community Group Selection

The 'do-ers' compiled a list of community groups who were known to be using the asset focus in their community building initiatives. **Eight** groups were selected including, Beverly Towne, Celebrate Parkallen, Grandin Community Group, Jasper Place Gateway Foundation, Mapping Inglewood Assets, Norwood Community Action Project, Queen Alexandra Community Knowledge and Skill Sharing, and Swan Hills Rolling Thunder.

3. Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed by the 'do-ers' through two months of regular meetings. Together, the group developed a list of questions about community building that they would like answered. These questions were compared to the Key Questions used for Listen and Learn I (see page 1).

Nine Key Questions emerged and were used to guide the development of the questionnaire. These Key Questions are:

1. What are you doing?
2. How and where did the initiative start?

3. How did you find the community assets and mobilize them? Be specific
4. What were the challenges of Community Building?
5. What determined sustainability?
6. Was there a role for a Community Builder?
7. Was there funding?
8. How has it evolved?
9. How did you define success?

After several drafts, the questionnaire was finalized (Appendix E: Questionnaire). It included 15 questions that were meant to gather information to answer all nine key questions. The 'do-er' group estimated that the questionnaire would take approximately one and one half hours to administer.

4. Interviews

Prior to the interviews, key people from each community group were contacted, provided with a verbal and written description of the research (Appendix F: Invitation), and then asked to organize a time when two to ten members of their group could meet and be interviewed.

In the process used for the interview there was one interviewer and one recorder. The interviewer was different for all but one of the interviews. This is not standard practice in qualitative research as it can affect the consistency of information gathered. While each interviewer may have had their own style of interviewing, the 'do-er' group felt that in order to encourage openness, an exchange of information, and to foster continued growth, it was essential that many different community builders be involved in the interviews, and that they have an integral role in the research.

The recorder was the same person for each interview, which provided an element of continuity. The recorder's role was to arrange the interviews and prepare the interviewers. During the interviews, the recorder introduced and explained the research, recorded the responses to the questionnaire in writing and on tape, and supplied snacks and beverages. This person also provided the community groups with a Thank You letter immediately following the interview, which provided background information, future directions and a contact name and phone number (Appendix G: Thank You Letter). Finally, the recorder was responsible for preparing transcripts of the interviews. These transcripts were as verbatim as possible.

5. Information Records

The conversations throughout the interview were recorded on flip chart paper for groups of three or more and on notebook paper for groups with less than three people. A tape recording was also made of each interview, with the exception of one, during which the tape recorder malfunctioned.

Immediately following the interview, the recorder reviewed the tape recording and enhanced the written notes. These notes were then typed on Word 6.0. A transcript was produced for each group interviewed, including the date of the interview, the names of the interviewer and the recorder, and the names of the people who were interviewed. Each interviewed community group received a copy of their transcript with a letter describing the progress of the research to date and future research plans (Appendix H: Transcript Thank You).

6. Data Interpretations

The interview responses were interpreted in three phases. The first interpretation took place on May 1 and 2, 1998, in Swan Hills, Alberta, during Community Building Gathering II. Representatives from many of the groups who had been interviewed were attending this gathering. The 'Do-er' group hoped that the community builders at the Swan Hills gathering would learn from other groups' responses to the questionnaire, use this as a beginning for discussions, and perhaps glean some information that would be helpful to their own group's initiative.

In order to interpret the interview responses at the Swan Hills Gathering II, the responses from all the interviews were combined into one document that listed all of the responses from all of the groups for each questionnaire question. There was no indication as to which group made which comment. The questionnaire questions were then organized into five similar and manageable groups for use during the Swan Hills Gathering. The groups were as follows:

-Group 1: Questions 1,2a, 2b, 2c, 6, 6a, 7a and 7b
-Group 2: Questions 3, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f
-Group 3: Questions 4, 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d and 5e
-Group 4: Questions 6b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b, 11c, 12
-Group 5: Questions 8, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e, and 9

Prior to arriving in Swan Hills, the individual responses for each question were cut into slips of paper and placed in envelopes labeled with that particular question.

In Swan Hills, the participants were divided into five groups of three or four people. The groups were provided with an overview of the research and instructions for the interpretation (Appendix I: Data Analysis Plan). Each group was then given a group of the questions and asked to look at the responses for each question, clump them into similar themes, and assign a name to each theme. The results were written on flip chart paper, shared with all five groups, and discussed. It was hoped that this discussion might lead to the discovery of themes that pervade the community building process, themes which seem to come up again and again, or themes that seem to underlie the whole process.

Upon reviewing the Swan Hills interpretations the 'do-er' group felt that due to the limited time and varying levels of interest, the data had not been explored to its fullest potential. It was decided that a second interpretation should be undertaken.

The second interpretation was conducted by four of the six 'do-ers.' For this analysis, the 'do-ers' took a different approach than the Swan Hills interpretation. They focused on the broad Key Questions that guided this research rather than the specific questionnaire questions, and used the responses from **all** of the questionnaire questions to answer them. Due to the volume of information however, the group decided to limit their analysis to five of the nine Key Questions:

Key Question #3: How did you find the community assets and mobilize them? Be specific.
Key Question #4: What were the challenges of Community Building?
Key Question #5: What determined sustainability?
Key Question #6: Was there a role for a Community Builder?
Key Question #9: How did you define success?

Each 'do-er' chose one or two Key Questions and reviewed the entire data set looking for answers to the question(s). Statements perceived by the 'do-er' to answer the Key Question were then clumped and assigned a descriptive phrase.

As a third stage of interpretation, the results of each 'do-er's' interpretation were then shared and discussed with the 'do-er' group as a whole. Refinement and verification of the interpretation was made until there was agreement among the 'do-ers.' An attempt was also made to compare the 'do-er' interpretations to the Swan Hills interpretations.

A final part of the interpretation was conducted in retrospect. In writing the final report, an oversight was discovered with the interpretation of Key Question 4: "What were the challenges of community building?" Many challenges were revealed, but the solutions were not addressed. In an attempt to compensate for this missing information, questionnaire question 4a: "How did you overcome these challenges?" was analyzed by one of the 'do-ers.'

7. Feedback on the method

Since the method used for this reflection was unique, the 'do-er' group felt it would be valuable to reflect upon it. Specifically they wanted to learn about the interview process, and the Swan Hills interpretation. A member of the "doer" group attempted to talk to one person from each of the eight interviewed community groups who had either been interviewed, interviewed another group, and/or participated in the Swan Hills reflection.

An informal questionnaire was prepared to guide this reflection on the process. The questionnaire included three questions:

- Was there anything that emerged as a result of participating in the group interview for you or your group?
- What did you learn about interviewing another group?
- How did you experience the exercise of grouping ideas at the Swan Hills Community Gathering?

IV. RESULTS

(*Note: original questionnaire responses are available through CDO/CBR)

Eight groups were interviewed, including Beverly Towne, Celebrate Parkallen, Grandin Community Group, Jasper Place Gateway Foundation, Mapping Inglewood Assets, Norwood Community Action Project, Queen Alexandra Community Knowledge and Skill Sharing, and Swan Hills Rolling Thunder. The group sizes varied from two to six people. Seven different interviewers conducted the interviews.

After completing all stages of the interpretations, it was determined that the 'do-er' interpretations reflected the Swan Hills interpretations, but were far more comprehensive. As a result, a decision was made to present the results of the 'do-er' interpretations.

The detailed interpretations for Key Questions three, four, five, six, and nine are described below.

Key Question #3: How did you discover and mobilize the gifts and assets of your community?

Six main themes emerged:

1. Developing and administering the group (eight main components, a-h)
2. Making connections through common interests and concerns
3. Engaging others (four ways, a-d)
4. Planning and accomplishing community actions and events
5. Sharing personal gifts
6. Using the Six Steps to Success©

To assist with the interpretation, the wording of this question was altered. The original Key Question was: "How did you find the community assets and mobilize them? Be specific."

Overall, six main themes and several sub-themes emerged in answer to this key question. These themes broadly describe both how the groups **discovered** and how the group **mobilized** the gifts and assets of their community. In essence, they describe the key elements of asset-based community building that these groups used.

1. Developing and administering of a group.

All of the groups talked about the development and administration of their group as an important part of discovering and mobilizing their assets. Eight key components were discussed and include (in order of frequency):

a. regular gatherings
b. food and drink at gatherings
c. informal structure by choice

d. group process
e. a paid person who assists and administers the group
f. specific group characteristics
g. new and enhanced friendships
h. a member who assists and administers the group on volunteer basis

a. Seven groups spoke of having **regular gatherings** as an important part in the development and administration of the group. Most of the statements simply referred to the fact that their group met regularly, whether it was once per month or once per week. One group was more descriptive than others, stating that they "rotated between Monday and Tuesday nights for meetings because people said it was important to them. We are willing to be flexible...to keep people coming." Another group stated that "people enjoyed the social time, talking to each other..." at their regular Sunday gatherings.

b. Six groups emphasized that having **food and drink at gatherings** was an important part of their community building initiative. This included everything from doughnuts and coffee to potluck suppers. One group stated that "food has really worked - it gets people in a room together to sit down at least the length of a meal, and a lot of the conversation takes place is the stuff that needs to get covered." Another group recommended to: "always have supper first - that's attractive - that brings some people out. It is a social time..."

c. Choosing an informal structure was an important part of group development for **six** of the eight groups. Interviewees stated that they purposefully avoided formal structure which would have included a chairperson, secretary, treasurer etc. Comments included: "the group is structured so there would not be burnout;" "[we] avoided [the] usual structure - uncomfortable;" "[the] whole group was equal - [we] went to pains to make it so [there was] not one leader;" and "lack of structure is the appealing point of the group." One group alluded to a challenge that they faced due to the lack of structure. They stated "[as] a result of doing the questionnaire, two people said they were going to contact somebody else that they found out about because of the survey. But whether any of that actually happened or not...its such an informal group - [there is] only a certain amount of accountability." Other comments referred to not setting agendas, and setting next meeting dates at the end of the meeting rather than having regular, predetermined meeting dates.

d. Group process emerged as another key component in the development and administration of the group for **six** groups. Statements supporting this theme described regular, pre-set meetings, holding meetings with set agendas, and reviewing previous meetings. Other groups referred to the establishment of committees a way to get things done and to keep people involved.

e. Six groups were able to acquire **a paid person to assist the group**. This paid person helped the group in a variety of ways. Some groups hired people to play a lead role in their community building initiative. For example, one group hired a community organizer and another hired a community facilitator/coordinator/animator. Other groups hired

people to do specific jobs such as surveying, research, and office work. One group stated "[We used our funding] to pay surveyors - its a job so they get it done. [This was a] very positive way to bring M. and L. into the community - [they are] getting community involved, and getting paid to do it."

f. Specific group characteristics emerged from **six** of the eight interviews as key elements in the development and administration of the group. Interviewees mentioned that it was important to have ***supportive community members***, community leagues, and municipal councilors. ***Enthusiasm*** was another characteristic that groups valued. For example, in reference to factors that determine sustainability, one group felt that enthusiasm was important. Another group characteristic that was highlighted ***team work***. Groups said "everybody pitches in," and "there is a core that shifts off ...." General statements about people also described the group characteristics. One statement read "people - not business or group - it is the individuals." ***Openness*** was also mentioned as an important group characteristic.

g. Another element that was part of the development and administration of the group for **five** groups was **new and enhanced friendships**. The statements grouped here referred to the social aspect of their group. One group said "[the] social aspect has kept it going - [it is] fun talking and catching up," while another group said "it has an element of being a social club. People get intimidated by strictly a meeting scenario and having to deal with responsibilities." Friendships and relationship building were also highlighted within this theme. Groups spoke of new and renewed friendships. In response to a question about the challenges of keeping people involved, one interviewee stated "[it] has not been difficult because we have all developed friendships - it's a bonus to go to a meeting because we are enjoying ourselves. This is my social life!"

h. Finally, **three** of the groups interviewed talked about the importance of a **member who administers the group on a volunteer basis** as part of the development and administration of a group. This person's role was described as record keeping, preparing and distributing meeting notes, and communicating to group members about upcoming meetings. One group said "Phoning and reminding and maintaining the list seems simple, but [it] has a big impact." For some groups, this person also assisted with budgeting and funding quests. A challenge for the person playing this role was mentioned by one group. They said "S. took on initially [the] record keeping...[but] S. did not get the fun of history because of being busy with this."

2. Making connections through common interests and concerns.

All of the eight interviewed groups discovered and mobilized the gifts and assets in their community by connecting through common interests and concerns. These common interests and concerns provided the impetus for people to connect initially and on an ongoing basis. For example, groups stated that "[it was] a reason to network and talk," "[the group historian was] a drawing card to meetings," "[we] ended up with history because [we] wanted to do something [we] liked," and "working on same issues has

united community." One of the common interests described was history, while common concerns included crime, safety, and housing. Other statements indicated generally that the group members had similar interests or that they were working together towards a common goal, such as making a directory of the community's assets.

The most common way of connecting was through **gatherings**. **Half** of the interviewed groups referred to specific gatherings that were held to address these common interests or concerns. The gatherings took the form of Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© Workshops, town hall meetings, community meetings, and a community's history celebration. The gatherings were as small as four people and as large as 500.

3. Engaging Others

Engaging others was highlighted by **all** eight groups as an important way to discover and mobilize a community's gifts and assets. Ways of engaging others included:

a. one-on-one conversations
b. the use of written communication and media
c. developing a survey
d. conducting a survey

a. All **eight** interviewed groups emphasized the importance of engaging others **through one-on-one conversations**. This included statements about going door to door to talk to people or administer a questionnaire, phoning people, and using word of mouth to communicate throughout the community. Several groups referred to the use of personal contacts and connections to network and bring others into their community building initiative. This included comments such as "K. brought and invited his connections," "A. went to every possible group she knew," "A. knew the old-timers and brought them into the network," and "[We] talked about going door to door but ended up going to people [we] knew." Re-connecting was also highlighted as a way to continue engaging others. One group stated that "[you] must re-invite, re-tell, [and] re-connect consistently."

b. Written communication and media was another method used by all **eight** groups to engage others. This includes distributing flyers, monthly newsletters, newspaper articles, mail outs, faxing, posters, and the community channel (television). These mediums were used to advertise and inform community members about upcoming workshops and gatherings and to share actions and successes.

c. Seven of the eight groups spoke of **developing a survey** as a way to engage others. Most of the statements in this category referred simply to the development of a questionnaire. This included discussion about the types of questionnaires developed, and the processes used to develop them. Some statements described the purpose for developing a questionnaire, such as comments about using the questionnaire as a way to reach out to people, to get people talking about possibilities and things they could do, to familiarize the community with their group, to assist the group in talking to others and to find out what skills people had and were willing to share in the community. Other groups

used a questionnaire to find out what people in their community like and don't like, and what needed to be improved. One statement provided insight into the challenges of developing a questionnaire: "development of the survey [was] too dry/academic, but we have kept going because of the entertaining and interest value of what we are doing." Another statement showed how developing a survey engaged others and contributed to the discovery and mobilization of gifts and assets of the community. It said "developing the survey led to us getting to know one another."

d. A final way that groups engaged others was by **conducting a survey**. **Six** groups talked about this theme during the interview. The statements grouped under this theme refer to preparing for and administering the questionnaires. Three groups hired, or considered hiring people to do the surveys, while one group enlisted volunteers. Other statements refer to difficulties that groups had with the survey. For example, "[we were] uncomfortable with doing questionnaires" and "[doing] questionnaires door-to-door [is] not fun. Nobody wants to do [them] in [their] spare time." One statement linked the survey challenges with hiring people, "[We] decided to hire people because nobody wants to go door-to-door."

4. Planning and accomplishing community actions and community events

All of the interviewed community groups discovered and mobilized the gifts and assets of their community through community actions or community events. The community actions that groups mentioned included starting coffee groups, opening a new office, fixing up the community hall, putting a directory together, starting a social card club, forming a tenants association, starting a Neighbourhood Patrol, and shutting down sub standard housing and drug houses. The community events included special festivals, pancake breakfasts, community clean-ups, history walking tours, farmers' markets, and Christmas caroling.

5. Sharing personal gifts

Six of the eight groups referred to gifts that individual group members gave to assist the group. For example, "G. designed the poster and fridge magnets on his computer [and] K. has a fax machine." Other statements referred to gifts shared on a personal level such as, "O. offered her gift of cooking Thai food on her own initiative [at a] dinner party.", "A. connected with C., someone she would have not met otherwise, [and it] made a big difference for both of them.", and "Talking about gifts [gave V. the courage] to write an Astronomy column [for the local newspaper]."

6. Using the Steps to Capacity Success

Three of the eight groups interviewed explicitly stated that they used the CDO/CBR's Steps to Capacity Success© from Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© as

a way to discover and mobilize their community's gifts and assets. They mentioned using the steps as a guide, as they began their community building initiative. Comments included "We followed the steps loosely...," "[we] did [an] informal capacity study - [we] have met lots of people [and] found out what they do," and "[The] capacity study was the beginning of our initiative."

Key Question #4: What were the challenges of Community Building?

Data interpretation resulted in **eight themes** that describe the challenges of Community Building. They include:

1. Challenges in encouraging initial participation
2. Encouraging ongoing participation
3. Establishing positive relationships with other groups and organizations
4. Maintaining the group's momentum
5. Leadership issues
6. Overcoming a negative image of the community
7. Developing and administering a questionnaire
8. Challenges with funding

1. Challenges related to encouraging initial participation

Encouraging initial participation emerged as a challenge for **six** out of the eight interviewed groups. Statements referring to difficulties engaging people in general included, "everybody's busy so it is always a problem getting people involved," and "it's always a challenge to get new people involved." Other statements referred to engaging specific groups of people such as seniors, young single moms, and lower income people.

2. Challenges related to encouraging ongoing participation

Continuing with the participation theme, **six** groups said there was a challenge with **encouraging ongoing participation** Some of these challenges were related to meetings. For example, "people get intimidated by strictly a meeting scenario and having to deal with responsibilities," and "people are getting tired of coming to meetings." Challenges highlighted here also referred to the work of the group including "people complained that we did not do anything, [we] were all talk and no action," and "people could not see what their roles could be." Other comments included difficulties maintaining enthusiasm over time and keeping in touch when the office moved.

3. Challenges with establishing positive relationships with other groups and organizations

Establishing positive relationships with other groups and organizations was a community building challenge for **six** groups. This theme included a variety of statements about

relationships with key groups that were not positively contributing to the community group's efforts. For example, "we had a negative response from [a business group]," "the school had different opinions about what a community initiative was," and "there was a lot of negative baggage in the neighbourhood around [two community organizations]." Other statements referred to a lack of mix between business and community organizations and challenges with miscommunication between groups.

4. Challenges with maintaining the group's momentum

Five groups spoke of challenges they experienced with maintaining momentum. This included comments about gaining credibility and recognition. For example, "[we] wanted to stay small so they could show action and success, so people would recognize that [our group] is not just a lot of hot air," and "[we] spoke to A. and K. which added credibility and confidence to [our] ideas, and made [us] think it was worthwhile." Other statements related to group dynamics and people resources toward getting things done. One group summed it up by saying, "if it becomes a drudgery or chore it's time to quit."

5. Leadership issues

Four groups discussed leadership as a challenge of Community Building. One of the challenges with leadership that groups experienced occurred when a person in a significant leadership role leaves the group. One group said "S. had a forceful personality, but it was very subtle. When she got sick [our initiative] fell apart," while another group stated "One of the biggest challenges we are going to face is with M. gone. He was the contact person who phoned people to give reminders about meetings. He kept us on task." Other leadership challenges included difficulties with delegation, not having a clear agenda, and concerns about lack of accountability.

6. Overcoming a negative image of the community

Overcoming a negative image of the community was a challenge for **four** groups. Statements grouped under this theme included, "[we] tried to flip the perception that R. was a terrible place to live," and "[we wanted] to get people thinking that U. was a good place to live." Other statements read "people wanted to clean the area up."

7. Challenges with developing and administering a questionnaire

During the interviews **four** groups discussed challenges they experienced with the questionnaire. The most common challenge was that the group was uncomfortable with going door-to-door. Comments included, "Door-to-door [is] not fun," "...some people are very positive, while others are suspicious," and "[we] decided to hire people because nobody wants to go door-to-door." Other challenges that groups mentioned included a lack of time and energy, a concern about whether hired surveyors would care about the

initiative, and questions about legality related to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act.

8. Challenges with funding

Finally, **three** groups felt that funding was a challenge to their community building initiative. The statements referred to groups having to raise funds for their initiative, or consider what will be done when their resources are gone.

How were these challenges overcome?

The solutions to these challenges were not specifically addressed in the interpretation. However, the answers to Questionnaire Question 4a: "How did you overcome these challenges?", provide insight. Several solutions to these challenges were described by **seven** of the eight interviewed groups. The groups spoke of **building relationships** and **bringing in more people**, and **creating actions** and **letting others know about the actions**. It was also important to **let others know about the initiative in general**, and to **ensure that it was open to everybody**. **Group development and administration** was also mentioned, referring specifically to the creation of a new group, and having a record keeper. Final comments included having **fortitude** and **adjusting the survey** to address privacy concerns.

Key Question #5: What determined sustainability?

Five key themes arose from the data to describe sustainability. They include:

1. Action and results
2. Broad based inclusion
3. Funding
4. Relationships and social opportunities
5. Having a good group process

1. Action and results

Five out of the eight groups interviewed referred to the importance of experiencing success, even in a small way. For example, groups stated "if you don't see anything happening, it discourages people, but when they see that things are being done they will come back," "[it feels] good to belong to something that is growing - to see it growing and [and to see] that something is happening," and "continue to accomplish things, even if little, otherwise you start losing people." Other comments referred to keeping the momentum going, and that people will stick together if they put their "sweat and blood" into the initiative.

2. Broad-based inclusion

Another theme that emerged as a determinant of sustainability was broad-based inclusion. The statements from **five** groups referred to getting more people involved. For example, "bringing new people in helps with burnout," "[our group] has evolved to include many others," and "participation is key." Other statements grouped here refer to letting the whole community know about the group's initiative, and getting the support of local community groups and politicians.

3. Funding

Funding was discussed by **five** groups as a key element in sustaining their initiative. For example, "[Having funding has] allowed us to focus on what we enjoyed vs. fundraising," "Funding was a God send," and "If funding is acquired - we may get help with administrative stuff - this is stuff that can cause burnout."

4. Relationships and social opportunities

Four groups spoke of relationships and social opportunities as important elements of sustainability. Friendships and relationships were mentioned by many groups. Statements include, "friendship and open hearts keep people involved," and "we became friends and look forward to [our gatherings]," "[the] social aspect has kept [our initiative] going. [It is] fun talking and catching up," and "things became personal to communicate, friendships started to develop. It became a social thing."

5. Having a good group process

Statements grouped under this theme discussed the importance of having a good group process. This includes leadership, sharing the workload, and supporting one another. **Four** out of the eight interviewed groups spoke of group process. Comments include, "[the] process more important than the end result," "even though we said no secretary, no anything, we still had a leader," and "[we] share the workload freely."

Key Question #6: What was the role for a Community Builder?

Six themes emerged to describe the roles of community builders. They include:

1. Engaging people
2. Administrating
3. Convening
4. Initiating
5. Providing leadership and vision
6. Facilitating

For most groups, key members performed these roles. It is interesting to note that at least one of the key members from each group had experience or training in community building, development, or organizing. For four of the eight groups, this person was paid.

1. Engaging People

One of the strongest roles that emerged for a community builder was engaging people. All **eight** interviewed groups spoke of its importance. Statements grouped under this theme related to engaging people on a personal level, through a survey, in writing, and engaging people in general.

Engaging people **on a personal level** was described by **all** groups interviewed. This included using personal contacts. For example, "K brought and invited his connections" and "A. knew old-timers and brought them into the network." Another way that groups talked about engaging others on a personal level was through word of mouth and one-on-one conversations. Comments included "word of mouth is the best way," "word of mouth invitations [were used] to promote the workshop" and "word of mouth is how the original group got involved."

Seven of the eight groups used a **survey** as a way to engage people in their initiative. This involved a written questionnaire for all but one group, who engaged people through door to door conversations. Many statements that relate to this theme include comments about developing the questionnaire and hiring people or recruiting volunteers to administer the questionnaire. A few statements grouped here refer to challenges with questionnaires.

Four of the eight groups found **writing** to be useful way to engage people. These groups spoke of using newspaper articles, flyers, and newsletters to communicate about their initiative.

Finally, **four** groups discussed engaging people in **general**. This included comments such as "bring in more people," "getting people involved was not the challenge. The challenge was keeping people involved," and "when we made an effort to re-contact people, more came to meetings."

2. Administrator

Administration was another role for a community builder that was highlighted by all **eight** groups. This role included functions such as record keeping, coordination, task master, communication, and being a contact person. Comments included "M. takes care of the business aspect - contacts, communication, flyers, meeting minutes etc.," "S. acted as a secretary. Meeting notes were taken and distributed to every who ever came," and "E. assisted with budgeting and funding quests."

3. Initiator

Another important role that was described by **six** of the eight groups interviewed was that of **initiator**. This included statements about people who took steps to get the community group or initiative started. For example, "M. and S. came to a Community League meeting to discuss the possibilities of it," "S. was the instigator. She knew about the concerns in [our community] and was looking for ways to do something," "S. brought forth an idea," "they got together with a volunteer community facilitator and decided the situation was no longer tolerable and could not go on," and "L. had a vision to get people in touch and start a fellowship."

4. Leadership and Vision

Leadership and vision was also a key role for a community builder. **Six** groups described members with these qualities. Statements included, "A. went with her gut and gave an outline of what could be done," "L. had a vision for her community," "C. makes good decisions regarding [our] group," "there needs to be someone steering the boat long term," and "S. was the core." Other leadership qualities that were mentioned included persistence, fortitude, and self-motivation.

5. Convener

Five of the eight groups referred to people who acted as **conveners** for their group. These people were simply in charge of communicating regularly through phone calls and faxing. This included consistently sharing about previous meetings and reminding about upcoming meetings, gatherings, and events. It also involved repetitive communication such as re-contacting, re-connecting, re-inviting and re-telling.

6. Facilitator

A final role for a community builder that emerged was that of a facilitator. Three groups described key people who acted as facilitators in their group. For example, "L. was a leader and good facilitator," "E. facilitated and got [the] group rolling," and "C. is heavily involved, but stands apart from the group. She is a facilitator."

Key Question #9: How did you define success?

Six general ways of defining success emerged from the data. These were:

1. Relationships forming between community members or groups
2. Getting more people involved
3. Making action happen
4. Creating positive change
5. Having a broader scope or focus
6. Addressing problems or concern

1. Relationships forming between community members or groups

One of the most pronounced measures of success according to **seven** of the eight interviewed community groups was **relationships forming between community members or groups**. People who would not have otherwise gotten to know one another or groups who would not have otherwise been connected developed a relationship. For example, "people who came out became my friends," and "[we have a] positive relationship with the police - now [they are] working for us." This included the intentional effort to engage community people in conversations using questionnaires: "it started out with the idea that we would do this survey to find out what skills people had and were willing to share with the community." Or, in a more general way, many groups spoke of "getting to know community," "friendships," or even a "coffee group" as a success.

2. Getting more people involved

Another key indication of success for **seven** community groups was that of **getting more people involved**. This included getting people involved either in the group or in planned community initiatives. Some examples of how getting more people involved was seen as success are "to get community more involved in the school," "building community involvement," "more people volunteered for community league or community - people who were not active before," and "more community residents involved and believing this was a community worth saving and working towards that."

3. Making action happen

Six community groups indicated that **making action happen** was part of their idea of success, and each group had many examples of this kind of success, including "Christmas caroling"; "farmers' market"; "flower planting"; "history/walking tour"; "pancake breakfast"; and "Spring Cleaning and Greening." Other groups described the action they made happen was what helped them reach their goals, such as a "new office" or "committed to getting 500 responses and did!"

4. Creating positive change

Success was attained by **creating positive change** in the community for **five** groups. This was indicated by groups referring to how they had positively impacted perceptions of their community. For example, "many people believe in the neighbourhood and want to be treated same as other communities - despite low income issues," and "get people thinking [of our community] as a good place to live." Success also took the form of actually changing some negative aspect of the community, such as "drug houses have been shut down," "sub-standard housing shut down," and "[this has] united a community that was divided."

5. Broader scope or focus

Four groups indicated that a community's initiative was considered to be successful because it had undertaken a **broader scope or focus**. Whether the initiative had expanded to include a larger area, "not just one location - [we] saw potential for entire community to become better," or more issues, "it became broader"; "we keep adding to our plate/our plan every year"; "now all facets of crime and safety are included," it was considered a sign of success.

6. Addressing problems or concerns

Communities often came together initially to **address a particular issue or concern**. This act of coming together with the intent of addressing a community issue or concern constituted success initially for **three** groups. Some of the issues or concerns included, "cleaning up the neighbourhood", "concerns around primarily housing in the community", and "crime and safety issues." One group talked about the importance of "bringing community back into the community. . . and take time to enjoy what is happening in your own community" rather than living our "hyper-organized lives."

V. FEEDBACK ON THE METHOD

Conversations were held with six people representing six of the eight interviewed groups. Three of these people participated in this reflection as an interviewer, as well as assisting with the information interpretation in Swan Hills, two participated as both interviewee and interviewer, and one participated as an interviewee only.

In response to the question "Was there anything that emerged as a result of participating in the group interview for you or your group?" three main themes arose. Three people said the group interview **highlighted their accomplishments** and **helped their group to appreciate their work** and **feel re-energized**. Two people said the interview led to the **sharing and generation of ideas**, and two people said the interview helped them to **recognize and correct mistakes**.

The three people who had interviewed other groups responded to the question "What did you learn about interviewing another group?" One respondent felt that interviewing another group was very interesting and led to **idea sharing** around what works and what does not. Another respondent said "even though we are all trying to connect and make a difference in our communities, **every community is very different** and has its own set of problems and challenges." The third respondent noticed that the collective sharing during the interview helped the group to realize their accomplishments and **led to a fuller understanding of what their group has done** or is trying to do.

Finally, four people responded to the question "How did you experience the exercise of grouping ideas at Swan Hills?" In general, the exercise was seen as being **useful**. Comments included "I learned what other groups were doing- got ideas", "it was interesting to compare", "made me appreciate our differences" and "it helped us to get to know one another". Two people discussed the process, saying "some of the questions were redundant" and "I wasn't sure what the outcome was supposed to be."

VI. DISCUSSION

Listen and Learn II has been an incredible learning experience for everyone involved, particularly for the CDO/CBR. This reflection proved that important, informative research in community development can be conducted in a manner which reflects the principles of asset-based community building. This research initiative was open and inclusive, and ultimately community building in itself.

The results of Listen and Learn II highlight the key elements essential to asset-based community building. There is nothing new in these findings, but talking and reflecting together has helped to distill and illuminate the elements that make community building initiatives successful. Listen and Learn I shed light on some of these elements, but because it was planned and conducted solely by the CDO, and focused on a specific tool - Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© - the results were somewhat limited. The CDO was uncertain whether the results truly reflected the *thoughts* and *experiences* of the communities.

Listen and Learn II was really about listening. Rather than focusing on a specific tool for community building (CCB&AM©), this reflection was designed to be open and unbiased in order to allow the natural elements of successful community building to emerge. The method used for Listen and Learn II ensured that the reflection was meaningful for all those involved, from planning to interviewing to interpreting the results. The following discussion addresses the five key questions which the 'do-ers' chose to interpret. These include questions three, four, five, six and nine.

Key Question #3: How did you discover and mobilize the gifts and assets of your community?

Using all of the interview responses to answer this question proved to be a daunting task. The first challenge was to determine whether the question should be analyzed from a narrow or broad perspective. The narrow perspective would have included data relating only to the specific actions/tasks the groups used to discover and mobilize the gifts in their community. In contrast, the broader perspective included data relating to all the elements of the group that supported or provided the grounding for their asset-based community building initiative. The 'do-ers' decided to take the broad approach, and look for elements that were key to asset-based community building in general.

Six methods by which community groups discover and mobilize their assets emerged. Of these six methods, four were described by all eight groups and provide insight into the necessary components of asset-based community building. They included **developing and administering the group**, **making connections through common interests and concerns**, **engaging others** and **planning and doing community actions and events**.

1. In order to discover and mobilize the assets of a community, the **development and administration of a group** is vital. According to this reflection, the optimal group structure in community building ***encourages social opportunities, and ensures group accomplishments.*** This is evident from the themes that emerged. Informal structure and regular gatherings with food and drink encourage socialization and the development of friendships. Good group process, including meeting agendas, notes, and committees, enables the group to get things done. Having a paid person or a volunteer to administer the group, including taking care of the details of calling, re-calling, convening, and keeping notes, also ensures that the group achieves its goals.

2. **Making connections through common interests and concerns** reflects the common asset focus among the groups interviewed. It is interesting to note that this element was discussed by all eight groups, even though one of the groups was oriented more around issues than assets. Perhaps connecting through common interests and concerns should be viewed as a fundamental component of community building, regardless of the initial focus of the community group.

3. The importance of **engaging others** through one-on-one conversations was emphasized by all eight groups. This was done either in person or over the phone. Developing a survey and conducting a survey were also ways that groups engaged others. The survey was not only a means to engage others, but the development of the survey was also engaging for the group itself. It helped them to get to know one another. While engaging others on a personal level was seen as essential, all groups still supplemented this with written communication and other media.

4. **Planning and accomplishing community actions and community events** was an essential part of discovering and mobilizing the community's assets for all of the interviewed groups. These actions and events provided another way to connect with and engage others in their community, and led to feelings of accomplishment and success within the groups.

The other two methods '**sharing personal gifts**' and '**using the Steps to Capacity Success©**' are definitely valuable methods for discovering and mobilizing assets. Although they were not explicitly mentioned by all the groups, they are both foundations or enablers for all four methods mentioned above.

Key Question #4: What were the challenges of Community Building?

In planning the research, several members of the 'do-er' group were interested in finding out about the challenges that other groups faced during their community building initiative. **Increasing community participation** was the most common challenge faced by groups, including both initial and on ongoing participation. **Establishing positive relationships with other groups and organizations** was also challenging for some groups. Other challenges included **maintaining the group's momentum**, **leadership**

issues, overcoming a negative image of the community, developing and administering a questionnaire, and challenges with **funding**.

Unfortunately, solutions for these challenges were not specifically addressed in this research. Questionnaire question 4a asked: "How did you overcome these challenges?", but the responses that were given during the interviews were not specific to the challenges presented. Perhaps this was related to the narrative nature of the interviews, and the rotation of interviewers.

In addition, during the interpretation the researchers directed their efforts toward the Key Question, "What were the challenges of community building?", and did not look for solutions. Considering the positive focus of asset-based community building, this was an unfortunate oversight. Realizing this omission, an attempt was made to address the solutions briefly by reviewing the responses to questionnaire question 4a: "How did you overcome these challenges." This analysis provided some general insight, but did not provide specific solutions.

Although the solutions to these challenges were not directly addressed in this reflection, the overall results provide a wealth of information and ideas for successful community building. For example, solutions can be drawn from the ways in which the community groups focused their energy to make their community building initiative successful. These are revealed in the results corresponding to Key Question #3: "How did you discover and mobilize the gifts and assets of your community?" (see page 6), Key Question #5: "What determined sustainability?" (see page 14), and Key Question #9: "How did you define success?" (see page 17).

Despite the fact that each of the groups interviewed were distinctly different communities, with varying goals for their asset focused initiative, they are facing similar challenges. It would be useful for these groups to continue to discuss and have conversations toward finding solutions together.

Key Question #5: What determined sustainability?

It was interesting that sustainability was determined for the most part by elements relating to **people in the group**. It was essential that the initiative include a broad range of people and provide many opportunities for socializing and relationship building. It was also important to have good group process, such as leadership, team work, and a supportive environment.

Action and results were also seen as an essential determinant of sustainability. In order for the community group to move forward with their goals, it was important that they experience success, even in a small way. This ensures that the group members feel accomplished, and helps build the momentum and spirit necessary to continue. It also sparks the interest of other individuals and groups, which can help increase the group's membership.

A final element that determined sustainability was **funding**. It was apparent from the interviews that funding allowed the group to focus on the enjoyable parts of their initiative. The funding could be used for administrative tasks and took the pressure off the group for having to worry about fundraising.

Key Question #6: What was the role for a Community Builder?

This question resulted in many discussions among the 'do-er' group as it struggled to define Community Builder. Is a Community Builder someone who has training and experience in asset-based community building, or is it someone from within the community who is a natural Community Builder? For the purpose of this reflection, the 'do-er' group chose to include both definitions.

Several roles for Community Builders became evident through the interviews, and all were roles played by both natural and trained Community Builders. The two strongest roles, as identified by all eight groups, were **engaging people** and **acting as an administrator** for the group. These roles are both vital to the continued growth and momentum of the group, and provide a way group members to share their gifts and experience. Other roles included initiator, leadership and vision, convenor, and facilitator.

Key Question #9: How did you define success?

Building relationships, engaging others and making action happen were the elements most necessary for the interviewed community groups to feel successful. This is not surprising, as these themes prevail throughout the results. Making action happen and creating positive change were also important definitions of success.

Discussion of the method

One of the most exciting elements of this reflection was the method by which it was conducted. Building from the challenges of Listen and Learn I, the 'do-er' group created an open and inclusive process that they hoped would encourage positive reflection and foster continued growth and learning for the groups interviewed. Assessing the process has revealed that this goal was accomplished. At least two community group members were present for each interview, and people from six of the eight groups volunteered to interview another group. In addition, the follow-up interviews indicate that the interviews helped the groups to grow through the recognition of their accomplishments and mistakes and the sharing of ideas.

VII. LIMITATIONS

1. Challenges with the questionnaire

Some difficulties were experienced with the questionnaire. Many of the interviewers indicated that they found questions 3d and 3e and questions 4 and 5 repetitive, and felt uncomfortable asking them. In addition, because the community group was telling their story, it was often difficult to keep the group on topic during the interview. This may have led to a broader range of responses.

2. Challenges with the method

The method used for this reflection was very exciting with excellent results. It was challenging to allow the time to ensure that the reflection was always open to participation, encouraged the exchange and flow of information and learning between communities, fostered continued growth through reflection, and was cross-community.

Also, although alternating interviewers was rewarding, it lead to some inconsistency in the results. Specifically, this is related to question 4a: "How did you overcome these challenges?" Interview training or alterations to the questionnaire would address these concerns in the future.

3. Challenges with the information interpretation

The method of interpretation used for this reflection led to some interesting and insightful results, but choosing to focus on the Key Questions was limiting. Specifically, focusing on Key Question 4, What were the challenges of Community Building?, led to an oversight where the solutions to these challenges were not addressed. Also due, to time restrictions, only five of the nine Key Questions could be examined. Perhaps some valuable information was lost in the other four questions.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Listen and Learn II has been an unprecedented opportunity for community builders to work together to plan and implement reflective, practical research in community building. This collaboration has led to creative new ways to conduct this type of qualitative research. More importantly key elements of community building that can be utilized by any community group in their asset-focused community building initiatives have emerged or been affirmed. Over all **four conclusions** can be drawn from this reflection. Listen and Learn II indicates that:

1. **There are three key underpinnings for asset-based community building**
2. **There is an optimal group structure**
3. **R.A.F.F. is affirmed**
4. **The LLII method nurtured Community Building.**

Conclusion 1:

The **three key underpinnings for asset-based community building** that seemed to be recurring and overlapping themes in the results are: **engaging others**, **relationship building**, and **action**. These affirm the findings of Listen and Learn I.

The most prevalent theme throughout all the interviews was **engaging others**. It was both essential and most challenging to the groups' community building efforts. The groups also identified engaging others as a key determinant for the sustainability and success of their initiative. Interestingly, engaging others was also seen as a challenge, specifically for encouraging initial and ongoing participation. This makes sense given that they are the most important aspects of community building. Finally, the interviewed groups described engaging people as a role for a community builder.

The groups strongly indicated that **relationship building** seems to be the second key underpinning for community building. The discussions revolved around the importance of friendships and relationships. It was viewed as integral to the development of their group, and a vital determinant of sustainability and success. Given this, it is not surprising that relationship building also appeared as a challenge for some groups. This was specifically related to the formation of positive relationships with other groups and organizations.

Engaging others and building relationships moved the groups into **action**, the third key underpinning. All of the groups planned and accomplished community actions or hosted community events. In addition, experiencing action and results determined sustainability and success.

Conclusion 2:

The interviews and the interpretations clearly indicated that the **optimal group structure** in community building is one which fosters the creation of an environment where the three key underpinnings can happen. An optimal group structure will provide the social opportunities for the development of friendships, and it will ensure the group has action and accomplishments. Factors that may contribute to this optimal group structure include informal structure, regular gatherings with food and drink, encouraging good group process, including meeting agendas and notes, and having a paid person or a volunteer to administer the group.

Conclusion 3:

Listen and Learn II clearly affirms the **R.A.F.F.** theory that evolved from Listen and Learn I and the Community Building Gathering in November 1997. All of the elements of R.A.F.F. (**R**elationships, **A**ction, **F**ood, and **F**un) emerged in this reflection. This reflection unquestionably affirms that ***relationships*** and ***action*** are essential elements of community building. ***Food*** is not represented in this reflection as strongly, but the groups that spoke of it felt it was an important part of their initiative. ***Fun*** was unquestionably implied from the results about group structure, which indicate that the optimal group structure encourages social opportunities, and ensures group accomplishments.

Conclusion 4:

The **LLII method nurtured Community Building**. The interviews helped the community groups see their accomplishments, feel good about what they had done, and for some groups, renewed their energy. Those who participated in interviewing another group were able to glean information for their own group through the exchange of ideas. In Swan Hills, in particular, the learning about Community Building was a shared exercise among over 25 people. This was an incredible way for these people to learn about other Community Building initiatives, to develop an appreciation for the similarities and differences among the groups, to acquire strategies to help them face challenges and to learn ways to capitalize on opportunities.

IX. FURTHER RESEARCH

The 'do-ers' strongly recommend that the four remaining Key Questions be interpreted in relation to the interview questions and the Swan Hills interpretation. It is also recommended that the participatory action research model used for Listen and Learn II be attempted by other groups seeking ways to reflect, learn, share, and practice simultaneously. Finally the 'do-ers' recommend that research be conducted immediately to discover how to increase the length of one day to 36 hours.

X. REFERENCES

Community Building Resources. (1997) Ourbook is yourbook - thinking about Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping. Spruce Grove, Alberta: MAGJS Publishing.

Dedrick, A., Mitchell, G. and Roberts, S. (1994). Community capacity building and asset mapping: model development. Edmonton, AB: Community Development Caritas.

Dedrick, A and Mitchell, G. (1994). Glenwood community capacity for health supports. Edmonton, AB: Community Development Caritas.

Dedrick, A. Mitchell, G., Miyagawa, M. and Roberts, S. (1997) From model to reality - community capacity building and asset mapping. Listen and learn ... the answers are with communities. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Dewar, T. (1997). A guide to evaluating asset based community development: Lessons, challenges & opportunities. Chicago, IL: ACTA

Kretzmann, J.P., and McKnight, J.L. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets. Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research Neighbourhood Innovations Network.

McKnight, J.L. (1995). The careless society - community and its counterfeits. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). How to use qualitative methods in evaluation. London, England: Sage Publications.

Appendix A:

Who are We?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Capital Health - Community Care & Public Health
c/o Jasper Place High School #681 8950 - 163 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5R 2P2 CANADA
Phone: (403) 484-9045 Fax: (403) 484-9099
E-mail: cdoffice@cha.ab.ca WWW Site: http://www.cha.ab.ca/commdev

March, 1998

Who Are We?

We are a small dynamic arm of the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton, Alberta, located in Jasper Place High School. Our numbers are small; there are three of us who are here most of the time - Johanna, Angie, and Susan - but we also have a great mix of community contractors and volunteers who "hang their hats" here depending on what is happening around our office. We also run a small business called *COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES*© through which we travel to other communities in North America to share our experiences.

Our group practices the philosophy of "Community Building", where we believe each citizen, community, organization, and business has gifts to share with others. It is believing everyone has gifts, and supporting each other in the discovery and mobilization of these gifts. We have a reference list that includes insights and publications, which have provided a sound theory base and resources for what we do.

This small office has become a resource and research connector supporting the development and sharing of new community and neighbourhood discoveries and existing community resources. Our fun and exciting work with Glenwood, an Edmonton neighbourhood, resulted in the development of a model, or path, for Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© (developed when we were with Caritas - now just revised, March, 1998).

Our experiences in Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© - the Steps to Capacity Success© - have broadened our horizons and our understanding of people. We have been delighted to work with other neighbourhood and community groups as they use Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© in a variety of settings and with a variety of questions. The general goals of Community Building are to:

- discover the assets/capacities that a community and its citizens are willing to share to support their community
- design an asset map that graphically shows the supports and their connections
- develop community resources for the community supports
- nurture relationships that will result in community animation and action.

You can see some of the next steps from the Steps to Capacity Success© that emerged, by seeing about our many and eclectic community connections. These connections have opened doors to a variety of partnerships and unusual linkages. We now see things happening in the communities and neighbourhoods as they move forward to bring in the rich gifts and other resources they have discovered together to enrich both the economic and social life of their community. We have had strong involvement with groups who work with youth, schools, agencies etc.. This work is grouped together as well and dispersed throughout under other subheadings. We are redesigning our workshop, which will be called R.A.F.F. It Up. It interactively guides participants in developing "asset focused" thinking. The workshop assists the participants in planning their own "Steps to Capacity Success©" with their neighbourhood/community.

Workshops that we facilitate include:

- "Spark Workshop" - to develop facilitation ability
- Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (P.A.T.H.) a graphic visioning exercise
- Proposal Writing - Just Do It

We have developed a new Community Building Workship for youth:

- "Kids are Key" - now being piloted with Westlawn Junior High School - a west Edmonton school

Please note: ***We now use the term "Steps to Capacity Success©"; various communities told us "Capacity Study" was not a good term.***

We have had strong involvements and connections with many citizens and groups including:

- Beverly Towne
- Acadia House
- Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research - Swift Efficient Application of Research in Community Health (S.E.A.R.C.H.)
- Actions for Healthy Communities
- Aspen Health Authority - Alberta
- City of Edmonton - Planning, Community Services
- Community Building Resources
- Community Groups - (Queen Alexandra Community Knowledge and Skills Sharing (QACKSS), Parkallen, and Mapping Inglewood Assets (MIA)
- Community Leagues - Glenwood, Millhurst, and Oliver
- "Discovering The SPICE of Whitecourt" project
- Edmonton Womens Health Network
- Family Support Network
- First Baptist Church, Edmonton
- Grey Nuns - Womens Wellness
- H.E. Beriault Junior High School
- Jasper Place High School
- Jasper Place Gateway Foundation
- Kansas City Neighbourhood Alliance
- Muttart Foundation
- Oliver Redevelopment Planning
- Pakistan Canada Association - Youth
- Celebrate Parkallen
- Prime Time for Women
- Queens Health Region, P.E.I.
- Stratford, P.E.I.
- Swan Hills, Alberta
- T.D. Baker School
- Toxics Watch Society
- WEBA - West Edmonton Business Association
- West Edmonton Inter-agency Group
- Westlawn Junior High School

We are resourced by communities, citizens, businesses, associations and health care for:

- Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping©
- community development education and training
- developing internal and external community communication links
- proposal writing
- developing partnerships and linkages
- working with service providers toward their understanding of community building, community development, and asset based community development
- practical community centred research
- searching for project based funding & support

After three years of Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© with the Steps to Capacity Success©, we spent time in the summer of 1997 revisiting our community friends to see what was happening. The results of this reflection on community building are collected in a paper entitled "Listen and Learn...The Answers are with Communities" the key learnings from which were presented at the CDS Annual International Conference in Athens, Georgia, USA in July 1997. The paper is available at our office, and the summary is on our web site.

In the spring of 1998 a further reflection - Listen and Learn II, with more of our community friends will be happening. This time though, we have the "doers" (some of our community friends), as the question-makers and askers. Stay tuned for the results.

As we work and reflect with more and more groups, our thinking about Community Capacity Building has evolved. We are always trying to discover the "essence" of community building. As a result of Listen and Learn I and a three day Community Building Gathering it has become clear "R.A.F.F.ing" is key. What does R.A.F.F. mean? Take a guess - we'll have the answers for you after July 30, 1998. We have yet to publicly present this, but will do so at the CDS conference in Kansas City, July of '98. The re-designed workshop will be available in August, 1998.

We have a tri-annual newsletter (Spring, Fall and Winter) that helps to keep our friends current with what we are doing and maintains the communication lines between all of us. If you would like to be on our mailing list please let us know or, if you would like further information, or have Project/Proposal/Research Ideas - Call Us, E-Mail Us, Snail-Mail Us, or Fax Us!

Appendix B:

Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© Philosophy

"COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING & ASSET MAPPING© PHILOSOPHY"

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, CHA **&** ***"COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES"***

c/o Jasper Place High School
#681 8950 - 163 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5R 2P2 - Canada
E-mail: cdoffice@cha.ab.ca
WWW Site: http:/www.cha.ab.ca/commdev

Phone: (403) 484-9045
Fax: (403) 484-9099

10 - 51330 Range Road 271
Spruce Grove, Alberta T7Y 1H1
Phone: (403) 484-9045 Or (403) 987-2002
Fax: (403) 484-9099
e-mail: sroberts@cha.ab.ca

August, 1998

Community development using the asset based philosophy is an effective way to animate, connect, inform citizens and create an environment in which relationships can build. The asset focus can be a catalyst and a spark for people to discover, access, and mobilize their unrecognized resources, and engages people who have not been and participated in the life of the community.

A model for Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© has been developed based on the work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), and theory drawn from adult education, First Nations community liaison learning, and in partnership with a west Edmonton Community League. This way, or path, emphasizes the positive - *community strengths and capacities* - and stimulates the development of a connected, animated and activated community, increased business opportunities, and readily available local supports for community citizens.

The idea of Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© comes from the belief that **everyone** has a talent or gift to share with others and opportunities must be created where the interchange can happen. These special gifts are often untapped because people may not realize the talents they have are special, unique, and valuable to others, or they may never have been asked to share their gifts. Often people require a connection to start talking and sharing. Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© includes everyone; it encourages conversation and creates an environment where people can become acquainted, relationships can grow and people are interested and motivated to support each other. It does not mean searching for the "needy" and the community deficiencies; rather, **it is connecting and talking with many citizens, providing a way for citizens to talk to each other, develop relationships, and share their gifts and capacities.**

A pilot was conducted in partnership with the Glenwood neighbourhood of Edmonton, asking "*What supports for health would you be willing to provide to citizens in your community on a volunteer or fee basis*?" (Summer and Fall 1994). The number and wide range of community supports for health and the connections and partnerships that were discovered were far greater than expected. This neighbourhood group is now moving on to putting in place the many ideas that were generated from their Community Building. This pilot was used to develop a model/path for conducting further Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© projects using the Steps to Capacity Success© (updated March, 1998). We have shared this model/path and pilot project with other Edmonton and Alberta communities and groups (in Europe, Australia, U.S.A. and Canada).

The exciting outcomes of Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© using the Steps to Capacity Success© are:

PLANNING

- a direct link for all to an informed, connected and animated community
- a mechanism for health and other systems to truly listen to the community citizen and for the community to actively participate in community planning and implementation

ACTION and ANIMATION

- an informed community
- emergence of groups of citizens who can speak for and to their community
- the formation of meaningful relationships and networks between people in the community and also between communities
- animation of citizens in the community

CONNECTIONS & RESOURCES

- identification of the assets and resources that community citizens, associations and businesses have to share with each other Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© nurtures relationships between people, neighbourhood groups, and businesses. The groups may create a written account or story, a summary feedback loop, and an asset map at some point.

We have, and are engaged in Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© projects with small towns, neighbourhood groups, a children's services group, a group concerned with food security, businesses looking for resources for stress relief, a group concerned about recreational supports for youth, and an alternative school looking for community connections for students and other geographic communities. There is, presently, community follow up activity & action with many of these groups, eg.

- A Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Resource Directory has been created in Oliver.
- A Resource Directory with history tidbits, and environmental and cooking tips have been created in Glenwood.
- A new Business and Citizen Neighbourhood Watch has started in Glenwood.
- Small Business Development is beginning in many of the towns and neighbourhoods.
- A walking trail.
- A resource centre in a local library.

A workshop has been developed to share the Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© model and how to begin by using the Steps to Capacity Success©. The redesigned workshop is now called, Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© - R.A.F.F. It Up - Making Community Building Happen. The workshop is open to any interested individuals, community groups and others. The workshop team travels to communities upon request.

In 1997 we took time to reflect with seven of the communities who have used the Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© model and the Steps to Capacity Success©. The reflection (Listen and Learn I) was carried out in order to learn about the successes or failures of the steps and what made the successes happen. The communities said that the positive, open, and sharing environment created by the Community Capacity Building & Asset Mapping© and the discovery and connections that it promoted, nurtured the development of relationships and friendships that resulted in many actions happening in their communities. The communities also said that the process of the Steps to Success© stimulated enthusiasm, commitment, passion, and energy. The summary of this reflection is available on our Web site or available through our office. Listen and Learn with eight other communities is now complete and the summary is also on our web site.

Appendix C:

Listen and Learn I Summary

From model to reality— Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping ©

Listen and learn... the answers are with communities!

September, 1997
Researchers: Angie Dedrick
Graham Mitchell
Mitch Miyagawa
Susan Roberts

Community Development, CHA
Jasper Place High School
#681, 8950 - 163 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5R 2P2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Development has many meanings and elicits different interpretations and ways of practice for different groups of people. Most often, the differences lie in **who** the players are and what **their roles are**, the **approach** that is taken, and the **methods** used to bring the community together. The new Community Development Office (CDO) is an arm of the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. In the new community-centered health environment in Alberta and Canada, the CDO saw an opportunity and a challenge to ask new questions and assume new roles. The Glenwood community and this Community Development Office found a way that encouraged community citizens to find their gifts and abilities and opened doors to ways for shared responsibility and more local action - the Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping® Model with the Capacity Study (now called the Steps to Capacity Success®). The essence of the Model and the Steps is a community engaging in conversation and discovery within itself, using a questionnaire and a series of steps that set the stage for Community Building.

This report describes a reflection in conjunction with the first seven of twelve groups who have used the Steps to Capacity Success®. The people from the seven groups were interviewed using a questionnaire that was developed to address five Key Questions about Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping® and the Steps to Capacity Success®. The answers to these questions would then be utilized to increase the level of success of other Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping® initiatives and to improve the practice of the CDO.

THE FIVE KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS were:

1. **How and where did the initiative start in the community?**
2. **What were the common elements used to find the assets and mobilize them?**
3. **What determined the sustainability of the community building over time (1-3 years)?**
4. **Was there a role for a service provider and what was the role? Was there a role for a community builder and what was the role?**
5. **Did any elements of the Community Building require funding, and if so when was it received and who was the funder?**

Data were gathered using two methods: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews with key community participants, and (2) the collection and analysis of written accounts and records located at the Community Development Office. The interview data were input on four databases using Microsoft Works 3.1.

The results showed:

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION #1: How and where did the initiative start in the community?
Initiatives started through gatherings which encouraged **"a new way,"** in an **atmosphere of sharing, learning, and discovery of each other's gifts, ideas, and interests, which ultimately led to relationships developing between citizens.**

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION #2: What were the common elements used to find the assets and mobilize them?
The Six Steps to Capacity Success® and the sub-steps were very useful as a vehicle for ***finding*** the assets and beginning the conversations that must happen between community citizens before

Community Building can take place. The **Asset Map** and **people getting together and developing relationships** were most often mentioned as ways for ***mobilizing*** the communities' assets.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION #3: What determined the sustainability of the community building over time (1-3 years)?
Five factors were identified as important to sustaining Community Building: (1) commitment, dedication, or perseverance; (2) being a part of an activity; (3) passion, honesty, and beliefs; (4) relationships; and (5) knowledge of community history and contacts. It was interesting that these factors seemed to emerge in some of the people as the Community Building progressed, and that others have them to start.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION #4: Was there a role for a service provider and what was the role? Was there a role for a community builder and what was the role?
There seemed to be no clear separation between the CDO and others as community builders. The CDO was a spark and enthusiast for all seven communities and an administrator for five. **All** those involved, whether they were a service provider or community citizen, exhibited valued personal attributes such as: enthusiasm, positive thinking, perseverance, sense of humour, dedication, and the ability to take risks.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION #5: Did any elements of the Community Building require funding, and if so when was it received and who was the funder?
The reflection seemed to show that funding can be an enabler for ***mobilizing*** community assets but may not help when it replaces the natural relationships built from the discovery of a community's gifts.

The key outcomes of this reflection were:

- Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping©, with the Steps to Capacity Success©, works.
- Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© nurtures an atmosphere of discovery and sharing, from which community driven initiatives emerge.
- The Steps to Capacity Success© facilitate the building of relationships and encourage the emergence of key individual gifts that sustain Community Building - commitment, dedication, perseverance, passion, and honesty.
- The CDO has keener awareness and understanding of the impact of the CDO's involvement in, and withdrawal from, Community Building. The CDO learned that staying involved longer is not disabling, but forms long-lasting relationships.

Future plans for more research may include further interviews with more people from each of the seven communities and interviews with other groups involved in Community Building using Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© and the Steps to Capacity Success ©. Sharing this research through publication, and sharing the summary and full account with others will provide further building blocks for those involved in Community Building.

Appendix D:

"Community Building Resources"

Chat with Susan about getting together with **COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES**℠ to discover, connect, create, and relate, to make things happen within your community, club, church, office, department or corporation!!.... You will find and discover things you would never imagine!

We in **COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES**℠ have had the pleasure of learning and working in many settings across Canada and the US. Some of these include: the town of Stratford in Prince Edward Island, Community Economic Developers in Nova Scotia, many groups, health authorities and geographic communities in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the Prenatal Nutrition Program in the NWT and in the Yukon, and Kansas City Neighbourhood Alliance and their member neighbourhoods located in Kansas City Missouri and Kansas.

"I think it showed me the value of strong community participation in town planning."
Stratford, P.E.I.

4 1

COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES℠

Aim High!

#10- 51330 Range Road
Spruce Grove, AB
T7Y 1H1
Canada

(403) 484-9045 day
(403) 987-2002 evening
Fax: (403) 484-9099
email: sroberts@cha.ab.ca

COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES℠

Aim High!

Susan Roberts M.Ed. RDN B.Sc.
#10 - 51330 Range Road 271
Spruce Grove Alberta
T7Y 1H1

(403) 484-9045 day
(403) 987-2002 evening
Fax: (403) 484-9099
Email: sroberts@cha.ab.ca

42

WHAT is *COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES*℠ ?

It is a small business led by Susan Roberts, an experienced asset-focused community developer and adult educator. Susan and her associates spend time as animateurs and conveners with citizens and their communities, groups, businesses and associations. Community Building Resources℠ assists communities in creating environments where relationships develop through personal discovery of others' gifts and assets, and in connecting these and determining the best use of these resources and assets to:

- ☆ develop thriving, self reliant communities based on strong citizen relationships and friendships
- ☆ create a picture of, and a path to the future
- ☆ create supportive community-centred and community managed infrastructures

"Now that we understand it is relationships not questionnaires - things are happening"
Kansas City, MO

- ☆ stimulate local community social and economic growth

"I never knew my community had so much"
Edmonton, AB

HOW can *COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES*℠ work for you?

By effectively utilizing any of the following:

- ☆ Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping©
- ☆ Participatory facilitation

"I take the steps with me wherever I go. I always ask the asset question first"
Slave Lake, AB

- ☆ Graphic Visioning and strategy setting
- ☆ Workshop development and delivery
- ☆ Community and citizen conversations for action
- ☆ The asset- based community and citizen capacity discovery and development
- ☆ Effective group process

"I like being involved because I have made so many friends, this is my social and work life"
Edmonton, AB

- ☆ Existing needs statistics and data and gap analysis
- ☆ Evaluation
- ☆ Adult education techniques and theory
- ☆ Nutrition/food information and education

WHO is the owner of *COMMUNITY BUILDING RESOURCES*?

Susan Roberts, owner, is a dedicated professional, who believes and is committed to the development of vital communities through potentiating the undeveloped and undiscovered relationships and capacities of communities, citizens and professionals. Susan has a broad based experiential and theoretical background in community building, community economic development, adult education and health acquired in the Canadian maritimes, northern and western Canada and the central USA.

"Once you stopped using the word - health, which confused me, then I could see, and now continue to see, that first looking at the gifts and resources of people in my community really makes a difference."
Edmonton, AB

Appendix E:

Questionnaire

Listen and Learn 2
Questionnaire

Over the past 4 years the Community Development Office- CHA has had the opportunity to learn about groups and people who have made a real difference in their communities by focusing on the resources, interests and gifts of local people. In September of 1997 the CD Office completed a reflection in Community Building "From model to reality - Community Capacity Building and Asset Mapping© Listen and Learn...the answers are with communities!". People from Glenwood, Oliver, Millhurst, Whitecourt, Stratford, PEI, the West End Working Group for Children's Services, and the Food Security group were interviewed. We learned a great deal!

To enhance the learning from this first reflection, we have partnered up with other community friends from Parkallen, Inglewood, Beverly Towne and Action for Healthy Communities to conduct a second reflection. Together we will be interviewing community groups who focused on their strengths and assets in their community initiatives.

Your group is one of the groups that we would like to learn from. We would like to interview a small group of people from your community group. By conducting the interviews in groups, we are hoping that your group will be able to learn as well.

We will be sharing our learnings at a Community Building Gathering in Swan Hills, on May 1 and 2, and through a presentation at the Community Development Society Conference in July.

Community:
Name: Date:
Address: Postal Code:
Phone: Fax:
Interviewer: Recorder:

---

1. Briefly describe your initiative. **(Answers KQ1)**

2. a) how did the initiative start? (i.e. in the very beginning)

b) when did it start?

c) who was involved? **(Answers KQ 2)**

3. We would like to learn about the process your group used in your Community Building initiative. **What ways or steps did you use (or are you using) to make your initiative happen?** Any insight you have about what worked, and/or what did not work, would be helpful. (Please provide as many details as possible) **(Answers KQ 3)**

(a) What ways did you use to get people involved in what you were doing?

(b) How did you talk to people (i.e. surveys, other)?

(c) How did you structure your gatherings? (When? Where? Details?).

(d) Who was involved from your community in each of the steps you mentioned (i.e. was it different people, or the same people)?

(e) With which local organizations did you have or develop, relationships?

(f) How did you let others in the community know what you were doing?

4. What challenges, if any, did your group experience with your Community Building initiative? **(Answers KQ 4)**

(a) How did you overcome these challenges?

5. What challenges, if any, did your group experience with:
(a) Getting people involved?

(b) Keeping people involved?

(c) Avoiding burn out?

(d) Getting NEW people involved?

(e) Getting a diversity of people involved (socio-economic, varying ages, ethnic, stakeholders etc.)?

6. How long has your Community Building initiative been going? (or How long did it last?) **(Answers KQ 5)**

(a) Was it short term or is it an ongoing intiative?

(b)What factors do you think have been important in sustaining it? (i.e. things, people, timing)

7. (a) Who would you say played strong roles in your community initiative? Were they:

Community residents?

Community groups (schools, churches, community leagues, businesses etc)?

Yourself?

Service provider/paid person?

(b) Please describe what role each played.

8. Have any of the activities or initiatives that we've talked about so far required funding?
Yes/No_____ **(Answers KQ 7)**

If yes:

(a) how were the funds generated? (i.e. by fundraising or by applying to various funders)

(b) what were the challenges and delights of fundraising?

(c) If you received funding, at what point in your initiative did you receive it?

(d) who was the funder?

(e) What specifically did you use the funding for?

9. How did the funding or lack of funding make a difference, if any? (i.e. a help or a hindrance?) **(Answers KQ 7)**

10. (a) What have been the surprising or unexpected spin-offs of your community building initiative (i.e. things that happened during or after your community building initiative)? **(Answers KQ 8)**

(b) When did they occur?

11. (a) How did you define success at the beginning of your initiative (i.e. what goals did you hope to accomplish)?

(b) Did that definition of success change over time?

(c) What successes has your group experienced during your Community Building initiative so far? **(Answers KQ 9)**

12. Do you have any other comments?

13. Is there anyone else in your community with whom we should talk?

14. Would any of you like to provide further individual response?

15. Would anyone like to assist us by interviewing another group?

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us. We hope this process has been of value to you! We will be sending you a summary of our learning.

Appendix F:

Invitation

Listen and Learn 2

What is Listen and Learn 2?

Listen and Learn 2 is an opportunity to reflect on your community building activities and learn together. We hope to interview 12 groups who, like you, have chosen to build their communities by mobilizing the strengths and assets that already exist in their community.

This research is an enhancement of a reflection that was completed by the Community Development Office- CHA in September of 1997, "Listen and Learn...the answers are with communities!". The CD Office spoke to people from Glenwood, Millhurst, Oliver, Whitecourt, Stratford, PEI, the West End Working Group for Children's Services, the Food Security group, and learned a great deal!

Who is conducting this reflection?

To plan and conduct this reflection, the Community Development Office partnered up with community friends from Parkallen, Inglewood, Beverly Towne and Action for Healthy Communities. Together we will be interviewing community groups to learn more about how focusing on the resources, interests and gifts of local people makes a difference.

When and Where?

Your group is one of the groups that we would like to learn from. We would like to interview a small group of people (2 to 10) from your community group. By conducting the interviews in groups, we are hoping that your group will be able to learn as well.

When and **where** is up to you! We hope to complete our interviewing by April 20, 1998, so any date before then would be appreciated.

- the interviews will take no more that 1 ½ hours
- we would like to interview 2 to 10 people
- we will provide snacks ☺
- we will provide a summary of this reflection to your group.

An opportunity for you to learn...

To ensure that the learning is as mutual as possible, we are looking for people to interview other community groups. Maybe some of your group would like an opportunity to learn from other groups. Would you be interested in this?

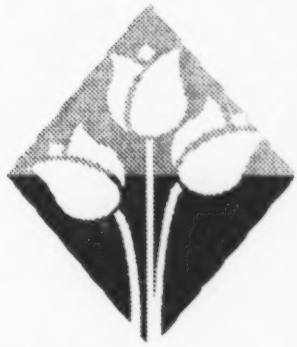
Call Angie at 484-9045 by March 23 and let her know the date, time and place where we can interview your group! Thanks!!!

Appendix G:

Thank You Letter

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and insights for

~Listen and Learn 2~



What is Listen and Learn 2?

Listen and Learn 2 is an opportunity to reflect on your community building activities and learn together. We are interviewing groups who, like you, have chosen to build their communities by mobilizing the strengths and assets that already exist in their community.

This research is an enhancement of a reflection that was completed by the Community Development Office- CHA in September of 1997, "Listen and Learn...the answers are with communities!". The CD Office spoke to people from Glenwood, Millhurst, Oliver, Whitecourt, Stratford, PEI, the West End Working Group for Children's Services, the Food Security group, and learned a great deal!

Who is conducting this reflection?

To plan and conduct this reflection, the Community Development Office partnered up with community friends from Parkallen, Inglewood, Beverly Towne and Action for Healthy Communities. Together we will be interviewing community groups to learn more about how focusing on the resources, interests and gifts of local people makes a difference.

What's Next?

Once we have completed the interviews, we will summarize the findings, and share it with each group who participated in this reflection. We hope the summary will be useful to your group as you continue with your community building initiative.

We will also be sharing the results of this reflection at a two day Community Building Gathering in Swan Hills on May 1 and 2, 1998, and at the 30th Annual Community Development Society Conference in Kansas City this July. Anyone interested in attending the Community Building Gathering in Swan Hills should contact Angie as soon as possible to register.

If you have any questions please call Angie Dedrick, Community Development - Capital Health at 484-9045. Thanks ☺ ☺!!!

Appendix H:

Transcript Thank You

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and insights for ~ Listen and Learn 2 ~

The Listen and Learn 2 "Do-ers" are pleased to report that we have completed the interviews for Listen and Learn 2. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this exciting reflection in asset focused community building! This has been an incredible opportunity to listen and learn together, and we have already learned a great deal about what makes community building work.

All together, eight community groups where interviewed: Grandin, Parkallen, QUACKS, Inglewood - MIA, Beverly Towne, Norwood CAP, Jasper Place Gateway Foundation, and Swan Hills.

This research is an enhancement of a reflection that was completed by the Community Development Office- CHA in September of 1997, "Listen and Learn...the answers are with communities!". The CD Office spoke to people from Glenwood, Millhurst, Oliver, Whitecourt, Stratford, PEI, the West End Working Group for Children's Services, the Food Security group, and learned a great deal!

Who conducted this reflection?

To plan and conduct this reflection, the Community Development Office partnered up with community friends from Parkallen, Inglewood, Beverly Towne and Action for Healthy Communities. Together, we interviewed eight community groups to learn more about how focusing on the resources, interests and gifts of local people makes a difference.

Thank you especially to Alf Bright, Mary Jane Buchanan, Joan Butler, Mary Gallivan, Miriam Grosh, Neil Moore, Susan Roberts, and Dallas Stevens for taking on the role of interviewer for at least one interview.

What's Next?

Attached you will find a copy of the transcript from your group's interview. We hope it will be of assistance to your group as you continue with your community building initiative.

The findings of this reflection will be analyzed in Swan Hills on May 1 and 2, by all those attending the the Community Building Gathering. A report will then be written, and we will send your group a summary. We will also be sharing the results of this reflection at the 30th Annual Community Development Society Conference in Kansas City this July.

If you have any questions please call Angie Dedrick, Community Development - Capital Health at 484-9045. Thanks ☺ ☺!!!

Appendix I:

Data Analysis Plan

Listen and Learn 2 - Data Analysis Plan - April 29/98 - A. Dedrick

-The data collected will be analyzed during the Swan Hills Community Building Gathering on May 1 and 2.
-The process will be as follows:

- Group research questions into similar and or manageable clumps as follows:
  - -Group 1: Questions 1,2a, 2b, 2c, 6, 6a, 7a and 7b
  - -Group 2: Questions 3, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f
  - -Group 3: Questions 4, 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d and 5e
  - -Group 4: Questions 6b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b, 11c, 12
  - -Group 5: Questions 8, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e, and 9
- For each question, cut out each different response from each interview. Keep the responses together with the question in envelopes.
- Split the Swan Hills participants into 5 groups of 3 or 4.
- Ask the groups to look at the responses to each question, clump them into similar themes, and give each clump a name.
- Once all the questions have been completed, write this onto flip chart paper.
- When all groups have completed this task, each group will be asked to report their findings to the larger group, providing examples.
- The group as a whole may then add their comments and feedback. Specifically looking to answer the following questions:
  - -Do you agree with the theme names?
  - -Any questions or comments in general?
- Once this sharing is complete, consider all the themes as a group, and decide if there are themes that pervade throughout the community building process? For example, themes which seem to come up again and again, or themes that seem to underlie the whole process.

Supplies Required:
-Mitch's flip
-LL1 Summaries
-LL2 questionnaires
-LL2 blurbs
-LL2 binder
-One copy of each group's transcript to take with them
-envelopes
-flip chart paper
-felt markers
-tape
-stickies